



2020 State Candidate Survey

1. Pennsylvania is considered the “Puppy Mill Capital of the East” and this year, six PA dog breeding businesses made the Humane Society of the United States’ “Horrible Hundred” list, which names the hundred worst puppy mills in the country. Further adding to the problem, the PA Dog Law Bureau of Enforcement does not have proper funding. While two bills have been introduced to help fund Dog Law (HB 1277, which would take the judiciary out of the Dog Law Fund, and SB 663, which would raise the dog license fee), it is likely not enough.

Will you support (or have you supported) these two bills, and what other assistance can you offer to help fund Dog Law?

Yes, if elected, I would support both of these bills. I would also work to find or generate additional sources of revenue that could be dedicated towards the Dog Law fund.

What are your plans to eradicate puppy mills and unethical breeders in Pennsylvania?

I will sponsor or co-sponsor new legislation to ban puppy mills and unethical breeders across the state. I would also like to help with public awareness campaigns that let the public know exactly how to spot them and why they must be banned, and provide access to a tipline where people can easily report suspected puppy mills and unethical breeders.

2. For decades, Pennsylvanians have been calling for an end to live pigeon shoots. We are the only state that still legally and openly holds these cruel killing contests. Year after year, a bill (SB 787 is the most recent) has been introduced to ban live pigeon shoots but has been denied a fair vote.

Will you support legislation to ban live pigeon shoots, and what can or will you do to ensure the bill receives a vote?

Yes, I stand by my 2018 commitment to support legislation to end this archaic and brutal practice. I will work with like-minded folks to educate both the public and other legislators on this practice to demonstrate why it must be banned. I would also advocate for stiff penalties for those who continue this practice. To ensure it gets a vote, the best thing I can do is help other animal rights supporters get elected to office.

3. Zoonotic outbreaks, including HIV, Ebola, mad cow disease, avian flu, measles, smallpox, and COVID-19, have all spread through the confinement, slaughter, and/or consumption of animals. Research shows that factory farms, which are rampant in Pennsylvania, are breeding grounds for killer pathogens because of the animals’ genetic similarities and the overcrowding of animals. While animal agriculture has long been hailed as the second largest contributor to human-made greenhouse gas emissions, our current crisis is revealing it to be a

What measures will you take to ensure that factory farms in Pennsylvania are operating using the safest and most humane methods possible?

We need to educate farmers on the dangers of their practices, and also show them how to evolve to more sustainable practices. As many farmers also face financial and economic challenges, I'd like to explore providing tax breaks and incentives to make it more financially feasible for farmers to transition to safer and more humane operations. I would like to see robust oversight and legitimate penalties for those who are non-compliant.

Will you support legislation to improve standards in factory farms, such as banning gestation crates and/or battery cages (means of keeping pigs and chickens so small that they do not have adequate space to even turn around)?

Yes. These practices are extraordinarily unethical, cruel and inhumane.

4. Plastic pollution is a growing problem worldwide and in Western Pennsylvania. Humane Action Pittsburgh's No Plastic Please campaign works to end single-use plastic (i.e. straws, bottled water, throwaway plastic cutlery, and other items that are only used one time) wherever possible. Most of these items are not easily recyclable and are costing our region and the state millions of dollars to manage the contamination of recycling streams, litter pickup costs, and landfill tipping fees. The PA State Legislature has now twice passed a yearlong preemption rule that prevents PA communities from creating policies to manage this deluge of harmful plastic waste. This state preemption prohibits regulation, fees, or bans at the local level. Meanwhile, regulation in other states, including bottle-deposit systems, requirements for post-consumer plastic content in products, and targeted bans and fees, are helping other communities greatly reduce their plastic waste and shift to more sustainable, responsible use of plastic.

Do you support or oppose preemption, and what are your plans to reduce or eliminate single-use plastic in Western Pennsylvania?

I oppose preemption and support the rights of communities to create policies that help diminish plastic waste. I myself just signed the "No Plastic Please" pledge, and will use my raised public profile as an elected official to lead by example on this issue, helping to spread awareness and education, and to implement no disposable plastic items in our office or at events we host. I would also like to explore the legislature's ability to institute a wider plastic ban.